

# BAPTIST CONVENTION

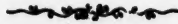
ONTARIO—CANADA.

## Systematic Beneficence,

BY

S. A. DYKIE,

FINANCIAL SECRETARY.



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## BAPTIST CONVENTION, ONTARIO.

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# Systematic Beneficence

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### What it is.

**B**Y SYSTEMATIC BENEFICENCE, we mean : giving to the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ according to a certain rule or system. Our beneficence may include contributions to the gospel at home and abroad, education, the poor, and any other objects that are worthy, and require our pecuniary aid. So far as this Convention is concerned, the objects for which we solicit aid are limited, for the present, to three : Home Missions, Foreign Missions, and Ministerial Education.

The system upon which a person gives may vary according to circumstances and his convictions of duty. The Lord asks according to what a man has ; not according to what he has not : but He requires that each one be a faithful steward of all His gifts to him : of time, strength, talents, wealth and opportunities. System in giving, however, implies at least three things : 1st, a certain proportion of a person's income ; 2nd, regularity ; and 3rd, where possible, frequency.

### The Measure of it.

The ancient Jews, so long as they remained faithful, gave a certain proportion of their income ; they gave at regular intervals, and these were comparatively frequent. It has been estimated that they gave in tithes, offerings, gleanings, and other ways, one-third of their entire income. Under the gospel we are required to lay by in store, on the first day of the week, as the Lord has prospered us. This law embodies these three principles : a certain proportion regularity and frequency. No law, stating the exact amount a believer should give, has been laid down by our Lord ; but we cannot suppose that those who have so much greater blessings to enjoy, and are under so much weightier obligations, will conclude that they are, therefore, privileged to give less than their brethren of the ancient commonwealth. The Lord leaves it to the enlightened judgment and conscience of His people, only requiring that they give as they have received, freely and abundantly. The *motive* is as important in God's sight, as the amount given, and even more so ; though this is very frequently as much in correspondence with the motive, as it is in proportion to our ability. The right motive will generally decide the due proportion.

### Objections to it.

Some object to laying down any rule for giving to the Lord's cause, citing His words, " Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." But we need to guard against the deceitfulness of our own hearts, in using such a prohibition as an excuse for withholding more than is meet from the treasury of God : for it is remarkable, as well as suspicious, that these words are used more frequently as a cloak to hide our neglect of duty, than to avoid ostentation in its

performance. We should give "with simplicity," but at the same time we should give with faithfulness. System in giving will be a guide to us. Only in this way, can we give to each object in the fair proportion of its claims upon us and our ability ; otherwise our giving will be fitful, uncertain, irregular. In a word, our benefactions, as all our other acts of worship, should be performed in such a way as to be a blessing to ourselves, as well as beneficial to the cause we desire to advance. The first and highest end, is blessing to the individual soul. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." It enlarges the heart, develops the affections, strengthens the soul. God is always giving : He would have His children like unto Himself.

But some will say : "It is impossible for a man to give a certain proportion of his income, when he does not know what that income will be—as the farmer and the merchant." Where there is a will there is a way. It is easy for the assessment commissioner to estimate the income of each citizen. A Christian man can be as honest with his God as he is with the tax-gatherer, and he has this advantage : the Lord will return him the over-plus, if there is any. Many of us, however, would have to send in at the end of the year, in the form of conscience-money, the balance due ! In this way only, can we know when and how to respond to appeals for aid. As it is, the most earnest and persistent appeal receives, not only the largest, but a disproportionate share. Like the unjust judge, we give to get rid of the importunate pleader.

### Universal in its Application.

System ought to be applied to every department of our expenditure, to outlay for rent, for food, for clothing, for recreations, to our savings against sickness and old age. If

professors were to keep a strict account of their outlay from year to year, many would find to their shame and condemnation, that they spend more in amusements, refreshments, in dress, in vain display, in useless and even harmful indulgences, or in some favorite pursuit, than they contribute for the support of the church to which they belong, for the spread of the gospel at home and abroad, and to the poor. Need such wonder at coldness, and the loss of all joy and peace in God : that they have a name to live, but are dead? There is hardly anything that requires to be more earnestly and persistently presented to the people, than their duty in reference to the use they make of the means God has given them. In no one thing are ministers, as a rule, more unfaithful, than in teaching the duty, the method, and the blessedness of giving.

### Some Calculations.

Estimating the membership of our churches in Ontario to be, in round numbers, 20,000, and allowing one-half of this number for persons without any income, as wives of members, children without employment, and the very poor, we have remaining, 10,000 able to contribute more or less to the cause of Christ. Supposing the *average* income of these 10,000 members to be \$300 per annum, we have a total income of \$3,000,000 : one-tenth of which would give us \$300,000. Allowing \$150,000 for the support of the 200 ministers in Ontario, they would receive an average income of \$750. Allowing \$50,000 more for the poor, and \$50,000 for church building, repairs, and non-denominational benefactions, we should still have remaining the handsome sum of \$50,000 for our great denominational enterprises. This would give \$15,000 each to Home and Foreign Missions, \$7,500 to Ministerial Education, \$5,000 each to Grande



Ligne Mission and Church Edifice Society, and leave \$2,500 to Superannuated Ministers' Society : nearly three times as much as we now contribute to these objects.

Supposing that *each one* of our 20,000 members were to contribute *one cent* per week each to Home and Foreign Missions and Ministerial Education, and *one-third* of one cent per week each towards the Grande Ligne Mission, Church Edifice Society and Superannuated Ministers' Society, we should have \$10,000 for each of the three first named, and \$3,333 for each of the remaining three—or, in all, \$40,000. *One cent a day*, for each working day, would give us \$60,000. *Five cents per week*, for two years, from ten thousand members, would give us the endowment of \$50,000 asked for Woodstock Institute !

Why is it that all our societies are appealing, and in some cases in vain, for aid? Because we do not give, on an average, four cents per week towards these great departments of service for HIM, who gave His *life* for us.

### Dangers to be Avoided.

Some will say : " Well, we will give that sum and then we shall have done our share." Systematic beneficence is not intended as a means for any one doing less than he ought ; but to afford an opportunity for all, however poor, to give as they receive and as they spend—week by week, or month by month. There are many who will fail of their duty, if they do not give many times four cents per week. Very few will do their duty, unless they give, at least, that amount. It must also be remembered, that there are many whose names are on our church rolls, who are absent from the churches to which they belong—members on furlough. There are others sleeping at their posts—heeding

no call of duty. Others in the hospital—requiring attention rather than giving help. And others who at the roll-call cannot be accounted for at all—deserters, or prisoners in the camp of the enemy—missing. The force of all arms ready for service, is seldom much more than one-half the numbers on paper. There are many little better than camp followers. It is therefore unsafe to calculate *our duty*, by counting ourselves *one* of the *whole number* and giving in that proportion. The sad truth is, that the giving of the church, like the work of the church, must be done by the *faithful few*. Let each one, after allowing for all these deductions, estimate his duty, and according to the utmost of his ability give to the *best of causes* and the BEST OF MASTERS.

### What Has Been Done By it.

John Wesley, when asked to what he attributed the great success of Methodism, replied, "To the Grace of God and a penny a week."

Not long since, Bloomsbury Chapel, London, England, required extensive repairs and some additions, involving an outlay of five or six thousand pounds. The whole amount was raised by weekly offerings ranging from one penny upwards, and the place was re-opened free.

The Metropolitan Tabernacle Church, London, besides paying current expenses by means of pew rents, and carrying on many vast enterprises, gives by means of weekly offerings upwards of £1,800 per year. A box is placed at each door, and on it are the words, "THE PASTOR'S COLLEGE. Each person worshipping in this place is requested to give *at least one penny*." Nearly \$10,000 from one congregation, for one denominational object, by Systematic Beneficence !



Analogies are to be found everywhere. The vast operations of our post office department, with its mail service by land and water, its letter carriers, clerks, post masters and inspectors, are sustained almost entirely by receipts from *postage stamps* of the value of one cent and upwards. One of our most prosperous daily journals, with a circulation of about twenty thousand, requiring a staff of trained workmen, reporters, correspondents and editors, is sold at *one cent* per copy. One cent a day from each of the twenty thousand subscribers, with the advertisements, supplies the sinews of war for this vast establishment.

### How to Work it.

First, let it be adopted by the church, so that it may have the weight of its solemn sanction. Next, let some person of good practical business habits be appointed to superintend this department. After a sermon or an address, let each member be supplied with a contribution card, to be filled and returned by a certain date. When all the cards have been handed in, assort them so that the whole may be divided into sets corresponding to the residences of the contributors. Enter their names according to their districts, numbering the whole from one upwards, with the sums they propose to give placed opposite. If the plan of collectors calling weekly, or monthly, is adopted, select one or two collectors for each district—which ought not to be very large—and give them a collector's book with the names of the contributors and amounts promised per week written therein.

In some cases, where many of the members reside in the country, it may not be convenient for collectors to call; or there may be other objections to the collecting system. Under these circumstances, envelopes of a certain color,

distinctly printed with the names of the months, and numbered from one upwards, may be used. The color and the printing will obviate confusion, even where the weekly offering system is in operation for pastoral support and current expenses. Each method has its special advantages, but space will not permit stating them.

It is very important—1st. That each person have a subscription card put in his hand, not simply left for him to take if he chooses. Consecrated common sense will suggest the best way to approach each person. 2nd. That no one be allowed to fall into arrears for any length of time. It is much easier to make up one month's arrears than four or six months. 3rd. That when any collector removes, or gives up the work, another be appointed to fill the vacancy. 4th. That every new member have a contribution card placed in his hand, so that the contributions may be kept up to the full amount to the end of the year : otherwise, on account of deaths, removals, and other causes, they will grow less and less each month. 5th. That returns be made promptly every month to the Treasurer or Financial Secretary. 6th. That none be weary in well doing, for in due season they shall reap if they faint not. It is a service that will pay abundantly in the advance of God's kingdom. 7th. That the whole work be done *as unto the Lord*, esteeming it no mean service to do anything towards training His people in systematic giving to His cause, and a high honor thus to help on in one's own humble sphere the great works of the Lord. Those who stayed behind with the stuff, received as much of the spoil as those who went to the battle. The commissariat of the army is as important as the artillery or the cavalry. Many a campaign has been lost through insufficient supplies ; and victory has been turned into defeat because the ammunition has not been sent on.

## The Material Required.

Cards of which the accompanying will serve as an example :

(OVERSE.)

### BAPTIST CONVENTION OF ONTARIO. SYSTEMATIC BENEFICENCE.

*Providence permitting, 1 purpose giving weekly during the current Conventional year the sums set opposite the objects named :*

**Home Missions** ..... **Cents,**  
**Foreign Missions**..... "  
**Ministerial Education** ..... "

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

HOW TO BE PAID..... (Please state whether weekly, monthly, or quarterly.)

(REVERSE.)

**20,000 Members.** **20,000 Dollars.**

DEAR FRIEND :—

*We require this year about 6,666 dollars each for Home Missions, Foreign Missions and Ministerial Education, from the Baptist Churches and Sabbath Schools of Ontario.*

*This sum can be raised EASILY, provided each one gives, at least, ONE CENT PER WEEK. SOME, however, may not give even this, and so it falls upon those who are left to give more abundantly to carry on successfully these great departments of service for Christ.*

*Will you not, for the sake of our COUNTRY, of the HEATHEN, and of our rising MINISTRY, give to these objects AS THE LORD HAS PROSPERED YOU?*

**20,000 Members.** **20,000 Dollars.**



(EXAMPLE PAGES.)

[illegible]

# FEELON

In remitting state  
only the totals as  
follows :

Home Miss'ns...  
Foreign " ..  
Minstr'l Educ'n.

Envelopes, if they are preferred, printed after the manner of the subjoined :

**Baptist Convention**  
**OF ONTARIO.**  
  
**NO. 1.**  
*Systematic Beneficence*  
  
**JANUARY.**

**Baptist Convention**  
**OF ONTARIO.**  
  
**NO. 1.**  
*Systematic Beneficence.*  
  
**FEBRUARY.**

Blank Notices :

**Systematic Beneficence.**

—:O:—

*Dear Friend:*

*Your Subscription for Home and Foreign Missions and Ministerial Education amounts for the quarter ending*  
*.....to \$.....cts.*

*The amount received and credited to you is .....  
 leaving a balance due of \$.....cts.*

*If convenient to you, we should be pleased to receive this balance at an early date.*

*Yours very truly,*

.....

**Superintendent.**



Blank forms for returns :

**SYSTEMATIC BENEFICENCE.**

**Monthly Return.**

From ..... Baptist Church for the month of .....

Address of Superintendent .....

Number of Contributors .....

**AMOUNTS CONTRIBUTED.**

	\$	CTS.
Home Missions .....		
Foreign Missions .....		
Ministerial Education .....		
Total .....		
<b>OR.</b>		
Postage and Registration .....		
Amount Remitted .....		

**REMARKS:**

If the church decides upon a *pro rata* division of the contributions, as one-third to each—or two-fifths each to two and the remaining one-fifth to the other, it will materially lighten the work for the Superintendent ; as he will then have to make only one entry, otherwise he must make three for each contributor.

**Concluding Remarks.**

This is an age when the power of little things many times multiplied is becoming more and more recognized. The world is discovered to consist of atoms—microscopic atoms. The human system, with its bones and muscles and tissues, is composed of single microscopic cells. Not an article we eat, not a thing we wear, not a tree, not a flower, not a blade of grass, but is built up out of single microscopic cells ; and as these atoms are, so is the whole. If for one year, all our churches, and every member, nay, even one-half, were to give this system a full and fair trial, we should awake to the

It is desirable that returns be made up and forwarded not later than the 12th of each month.

consciousness that we had a power within us by which we could accomplish works which now appal us. We have but to cast our pennies week by week into the treasury of the Lord, and as the falling rain-drops fill and overflow the pools, so would it fill and overflow. As the snow flakes—single flakes—fall and cover hill and dale with their mantle of white, so would our benefactions, as benedictions, fall over every hill and valley of our loved land, yes, and over distant lands.

Let no one condemn as mean and contemptible, this giving of one, two, four or forty cents per week. Anything that has in it such mighty possibilities, demands our deepest attention and commands our hearty coöperation.

Let not the poor, because he can give but *one cent*, refuse that. The Lord, who sat over against the Treasury, noticed, and commended, the poor widow who cast in her two mites. The wealthy can give in any way they please, therefore they can give in this way, *if they please*. Brethren of means, will you not, for the sake of others who will follow your example, condescend to this method? Some of the wealthiest and most honored of our brethren are foremost in practicing and advising Systematic Beneficence.

If, however, dear reader, what we have presented has neither convinced you nor won you, then we *beseech* you for the sake of our COUNTRY, the HEATHEN, and our rising MINISTRY, to give *in your own way*, and so to give that there may be a holy rivalry between the *old* and the *new*.

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“There is that SCATTERETH, and yet INCREASETH; and there is that *withholdeth* more than is meet, but it tendeth to *poverty*.”  
SOLOMON.

“GIVE and it SHALL BE GIVEN unto you . . . . For with the *same measure* that ye mete withal it *shall be measured* to you again.”  
JESUS.